



## NEWS RELEASE



DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS

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**OHA Media Contact:**

Crystal Kua  
Director of Communications  
P: 808-594-1983 C: 808-265-9308  
email: [crystalk@oha.org](mailto:crystalk@oha.org)

**DHHL Media Contact:**

Lloyd Yonenaka, ICRO  
P: 808-620-9591 C: 808-754-0078  
email: [lloyd.yonenaka@hawaii.gov](mailto:lloyd.yonenaka@hawaii.gov)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **OHA, DHHL JOIN FORCES TO BUILD AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

HONOLULU – The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) and the State Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) today announced they are joining forces in a historic partnership to provide more affordable housing for native Hawaiians, while improving the quality of life for surrounding communities.

The OHA Board of Trustees today approved a grant of \$3 million a year to cover the debt service for up to 30 years for up to \$40 million in revenue bonds as part of DHHL's 2008-2009 construction budget. The bonds will be used for statewide construction projects and \$5 million will be earmarked to fund planning, design and feasibility studies for community-driven projects in 18 regions throughout the State of Hawai'i.

The Legislature this year approved the Administration's request to issue \$100 million in revenue bonds for development projects statewide.

"The Office of Hawaiian Affairs serves all Hawaiians. In OHA's 30-year history, there has been no other OHA-DHHL financial partnership on the scale and magnitude of this one. Our collective success will help citizens appreciate the positive benefits of Hawaiian self-determination." OHA Chairperson Haunani Apoliona said. "It is a privilege to join with Governor Lingle, the Legislature, Micah and DHHL in serving our beneficiaries."

"OHA's assistance will enable DHHL to directly touch an additional 400 to 500 beneficiaries over the next 12 to 18 months with affordable housing opportunities," Governor Linda Lingle

said. “But the impact for generations to come is immense with generations having the chance to grow up in a home they own.”

The Governor also noted that Hawai‘i’s economy will benefit from the new jobs that will be created by these housing projects.

“This partnership will help everyone,” Gov. Lingle said. “The infusion of capital into the construction industry helps to preserve jobs in all sectors of our economy.”

Hawaiian Homes Commission Chairman Micah Kane said that preliminary discussions between OHA and DHHL began last year regarding the possibility of obtaining OHA’s financial support.

“Beneficiaries continue to urge DHHL to work with OHA especially with regard to obtaining financing for infrastructure for upcoming residential homestead developments,” Kane said. “We believe our track record of building affordable homes was important for both OHA and the Legislature in order to invest in this partnership.”

OHA Administrator Clyde Nāmu‘o said that the approval by the Trustees today will allow OHA and DHHL to enter in to an agreement by next month.

“The ultimate purpose of providing these funds is to allow DHHL to expeditiously implement Community Master Plans throughout the state,” Nāmu‘o said.

“Nānā ka maka, ho‘olohe ka pepeiao, pa‘a ka waha, hana ka lima – productive Hawaiian self-determination is good for Hawaiians; it is also good for all of Hawai‘i nei. This alliance is a perfect example,” Apoliona said.

“The Administration, the Legislature, OHA and DHHL working together highlights how government is taking an active role in keeping our economy strong,” said Kyle Chock, executive director of the Pacific Resources Partnership. “We are especially fortunate to have OHA step up

at this time because this partnership will help preserve jobs for our members, and that's good for everyone."

Also on hand for the announcement were Senate President Colleen Hanabusa, House Majority Leader Kirk Caldwell and representatives of homesteader associations and the construction industry. House Speaker Calvin Say, who is off island, extended his congratulations.

Another successful partnership between OHA and DHHL is the Home Ownership Assistance Program. Last year, OHA provided DHHL with a \$500,000 grant in support of the Home Ownership Assistance Program, which prepares and equips Native Hawaiians for homeownership through homebuyer counseling.